

BRODICK CASTLE

& GARDENS



The National Trust for Scotland

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Foreword

by The Lady Jean Fforde

BRODICK CASTLE, with my mother and father, was home to us their family. They were homely people, with an intense sense of humour and complete unity one with the other, which could not fail to build a home where we returned from school, or on leave and from abroad, for we are a scattered family. How could the walls of this house fail to imbibe some of this happy atmosphere? Some are apt to think of a duke and duchess living with a permanent Hollywood backcloth—the Duke and Duchess of Montrose were real people, highly civilised; my mother was an artist and played the piano and the violin beautifully. Both were great readers. Both had their feet placed firmly on the ground and so knew there was no chance of any of their family being able to retain a castle of this size.

Brodict belonged to my mother, and for years she tried to make it possible for the National Trust for Scotland to accept it. The endowment was always elusive, but her endeavours have borne fruit and no one would have been more thrilled than she. After her death in 1957 the Treasury accepted her beloved home and gardens and their contents in lieu of death duties, and the National Trust for Scotland accepted the responsibility of running it on behalf of the nation. What a difficult inheritance fell to them; the most homely home to be shown to the public—yet I am sure you will still feel you are about to meet the Duchess and her black-and-white spaniel round the corner, or to see the Duke reading in the next room. This atmosphere of home is the most difficult thing of all to hold on to and to let people feel.

I hope you feel this in her garden too. Imagine it as her one real relaxation from a crowded life of duty. Think of her in her tartan skirt and tweed jacket, spaniel at heel, making time—in fact escaping—to her garden with her much loved son-in-law, Major Boscawen, to evolve something of utter beauty through great knowledge and patience. You will find her favourite quotation on a stone by the sundial:

The Kiss of the sun for pardon,
The Song of the birds for mirth.
You are nearer God's heart in a garden
Than anywhere else on earth.

Brodick Castle, a seat of the Dukes of Hamilton until 1895, was subsequently the home of Mary Louise, Duchess of Montrose, the only child of the twelfth Duke of Hamilton. In 1958, a year after her death, the castle and contents were accepted in lieu of estate duty by the Commissioners of Inland Revenue and the Treasury conveyed them to the National Trust for Scotland.

The contents include many fine examples of silver, porcelain and paintings from the collections of William Beckford, the Dukes of Hamilton and the Earls of Rochford, together with sporting pictures and trophies.

The castle has magnificent gardens and 7,300 acres of mountainous territory. The latter, the gift of Lady Jean Fforde, daughter of the Duchess of Montrose, includes Goatfell, Cir Mhor and part of Glen Rosa.



1. Origins

Brodick Castle, the subject of 'many upturnings and rebuildings' as MacGibbon and Ross* observed nearly a century ago, is a magnificent house.

The site on the north side of Brodick Bay was originally chosen as a military base. The wide views across the Firth of Clyde came to be appreciated later.

The island of Arran, the largest in the Clyde estuary, has a land surface of less than 170 square miles, roughly half of one per cent of the total area of Scotland. It soars from the sea like an outlier of the intractable land farther north, the true Highlands. From the Ayrshire shore, units of the Roman army, legionaries in the 1st century AD, legionaries and auxiliaries thereafter, could spy against the western sky a long spine of peaks and pinnacles.

Inevitably, the Norsemen came. Some settled to farm, but the battle of Largs put an end to that in 1263—King Haakon IV did not linger an hour in Lamlash Bay once he got the remnant of his fleet together. The oldest masonwork in Brodick Castle is of slightly later date. That castle, a lesser 'strength' than those of Rothesay and Dunstaffnage, no doubt also helped to extend the power of the Canmore kings to the western dominions. All was undone when Alexander III, the last of them, went over the cliff at Kinghorn in 1286.

There followed from his death the disputed succession and the Scottish wars of independence. The English seized the castle for Edward I. King Robert the Bruce, a fugitive almost from the day of his coronation at Scone in March 1306, got little comfort in Arran, holed up in one of the glens in the following spring. Not until he reached his own lands of Turnberry in Ayrshire could he even start on the long, seven-year haul to victory at Bannockburn.

In the two centuries which followed, the castle fell three times—twice to the English and once to the Douglas interest.

The castle and much of the island passed in 1503 to a family whose members were to hold centre-stage up to the Union of the Crowns and beyond, and to hold Brodick until the middle of the present century. James IV granted to his cousin James, second Baron Hamilton, a charter as the king's justiciary within the bounds of Arran and an earldom to go with it—Hamilton was the son of Sir James Hamilton of Cadzow and the Princess Mary, sister of James III. His son in turn, the second Earl of Arran, was Regent of Scotland and a guardian of the infant Mary Queen of Scots.

Brodick would have seen less of the laird had Arran not been deposed from the regency in 1554 in favour of the Queen

*Castellated and Domestic Architecture of Scotland.

Mother, Mary of Guise. By way of solatium he was awarded the Duchy of Chatelherault in France. More importantly for Arran, he returned, remodelled and enlarged the castle in a fashion proper to his status and the hazards of the time, and made so good a job of it that the old walls, built about 1558, are sound and strong today.

It was no gain to the Stewarts or the Hamiltons that King James VI and I had two sons. Henry, the elder, died. Charles I went to his coronation in 1625 untutored in government, inheriting the theory of absolute monarchy and knowing little of Scotland. His subsequent actions, intolerant as those of the Scots ecclesiastics, made the 'religious wars' inescapable. The latter brought about the death of James, third Marquess and first Duke of Hamilton.

Hamilton, appointed at his own urging as King's Commissioner in Scotland, hurried from Whitehall to Edinburgh in June 1638. The National Covenant had been produced four months before. Copies were being circulated for signature, without much scruple as to how signatures were obtained. A year later the Civil War began.

Arran suffered twice over the penalties and indignities common to occupied territories. At the outset Archibald Campbell, first Marquess of Argyll, the Covenant's Warden of the West, took the castle and put in a Campbell garrison. After Cromwell's defeat of Charles II at Worcester (1651) it was the turn of the Ironsides and English levies. They turned Brodick into a mini-fortress, adding on the east a battery with loopholes for guns and on the west a substantial addition to the Earl of Arran's tower.

Over the water, barbarity in the field was punctuated by a barbarous shedding of heads, all allegedly by due process of law—

Charles I in January 1649, Hamilton a few weeks later, Montrose in May 1650, Argyll in May 1661.



The dukedom, created in 1643, descended to the daughter of the King's Commissioner, 'the good Duchess Anne'. It may be that Brodick was seldom first in favour, then or for many years after, as against the family estates in Lanarkshire but it was never neglected. Arran became acquainted with the notions of the times. There were efforts to introduce the 'new agriculture' in a Lowland style, with little ultimate detriment to an old system of landholding. The castle acquired a walled garden about 1710.

The great house of Hamilton increased in wealth and influence. Dukes took to the sporting life in company with 'heavy swells', gamblers, pugilists and racing men, and became racing men themselves.

Marriage contracts spun a new web of relationships, as when the widow of the fifth Duke married Richard Savage Nassau, son of the third Earl of Rochford. Forty-nine years later Susan Euphemia, younger daughter and co-heir of the great collector William Beckford of Fonthill, became the bride of the tenth Duke of Hamilton. Their son William (eleventh Duke) married on 23 February 1843 Princess Marie of Baden, daughter of Charles Louis Frederick, reigning Grand Duke of Baden, and Stephanie de Beauharnais who was a niece of the Empress Josephine.

The two marriages of Lady Mary, sister of the twelfth Duke, added to the European relationships. Her first husband was Prince Albert of Monaco, her second Count Tassilo Festetics de Tolna, later created a Hungarian Prince. Lady Mary's picture hangs in the Duchess' bedroom; a bust is in the front hall.

Memorabilia of all of these make Brodick a social document of unusual diversity.

William, the then Marquess of Douglas and Clydesdale, resolved with Marie to make Brodick a home, and within a year of their marriage James Gillespie Graham was commissioned to design yet another extension to the west, equivalent in size to the Cromwell tower and the 16th-century house together.





2. The Great House

Dr. Douglas Simpson said of Craigievar Castle in Grampian that 'it cocks up its lugs'. On the main front Brodick does the same. But to concentrate on the western towers is to miss the subtlety with which the architect gave the house a new dimension.

Gillespie Graham may conceivably have been second choice. Hamilton Palace, home of the Dukes of Hamilton, and demolished years ago, was the work of David Hamilton whose contributions to the Glasgow townscape include the Royal Exchange and Hutchesons' Hospital. Hamilton died in 1843. That Graham was the right man in the right place at the right time is never in doubt when one scans the long expanse of the south front from the walled garden below the terrace.

The eastern terminal, omitting the stump on the site of Cromwell's battery, is the tower-house raised in the 16th century by the second Earl of Arran. (It has within its walls the remnant of a 13th-century round tower, and MacGibbon and Ross say that 'in 1638-39 it was put into a state of defence by the Marquis of Hamilton in the interest of Charles I'. To the west of the older building Scottish stonemasons, impressed for work in the Cromwellian interest, constructed a rectangular block (1652-53) which, though back-set a little, matched it in height and in three courses of corbelling under the battlements. Together these older buildings have, for all their seeming simplicity, a dignity and urbanity which would not normally come within the specification for a barrack.

Gillespie Graham, starting at that point, built in the same red sandstone, and with conscientious regard for a Scottish form of architecture which had fallen into disuse. He may not have had complete understanding of it—that came later to younger men of a scholarly turn. Here he practised a kind of free traditionalism and could summon men skilled in many trades to give it effect.

The western terminal, a four-storey tower to which bartizans and turrets and the equivalent of a cap-house were added in this century, is more Scots than Victorian 'Scots baronial'. Like its companion on the north-west, a tower one storey less in height, it takes a trick by economical use of ornament and only a little less subtle use of entasis, an inward inclination of the wall as it rises, than one sees in the Castles of Mar. What points up the difference in time-scale, geographical location, and the purpose of the rooms which the architect was contracted to provide, is the arched outline of doorhead and windowheads—and the size of windows themselves, on the south front of the house as well as in the towers.

In the judgement of Schomberg Scott* Brodick 'is a building such as only Scotland can show, making its effect, like its 17th-century prototypes, by height and almost stark simplicity which at first belies and then enhances the richness within'.

'The richness within' derives in part from imaginative handling of architectural detail and decoration—elaborate decoration that stops short of extravagance. What takes the eye in the entrance hall is a large carved fireplace exhibiting the device of the Dukes of Hamilton. For the staircase Gillespie Graham went back to Jacobean models and devised an interlaced balustrade. The head of the staircase, dignified by a triple arch of carved stonework, opens on a square landing on the first floor.

Thence a gallery runs the length of the north side of the house. Ample in proportion, splendid in content, it gives access to the three public rooms on the south and sunny side of the castle.

In order, west to east, these are the great saloon or drawing room, the old library and the dining room, all interconnected, the library accommodated in the Cromwellian building and the dining room in the Earl of Arran's tower.

The great saloon, a lofty room, a place of light and space, was planned as a hub of social life. The plaster ceiling, Italian work, declares in heraldic terms the eminence of the family from the time of James II, father of the Princess Mary who wed Sir James Hamilton of Cadzow, the first Baron Hamilton, down to the eleventh Duke of Hamilton.

New plaster ceilings, more restrained, no less elegant, went up in the old library and the dining room. The former room remains unaltered from the day the Marquess of Douglas and Clydesdale and his bride Princess Marie took possession of the 'new' Brodick. His monogram appears on the fire grate. The panelling with which the dining room is lined came from Letheringham Abbey near Easton Park in Suffolk, a property which the Hamiltons acquired through the Nassau connection.

To establish how Brodick came to house the last surviving portion of a vast art collection, one of the greatest ever assembled by an individual, it is necessary to go back in time beyond the marriage of Alexander, tenth Duke and Susan Euphemia Beckford on 26 April 1810 and in distance as far as Jamaica. That was where the money was made in the first instance.

The father of William Beckford (William also) moved to London at the age of fourteen. He inherited a 'plantation'

*('The National Trust for Scotland Guide'.



fortune, was twice Lord Mayor, became a Member of Parliament, and purchased Fonthill Abbey in Wiltshire to be his country place. At the father's death in 1770 William, the connoisseur, was only just into his teens. He had a long lifetime in which to indulge his tastes and fancies. These he backed as confidently as the sporting Hamiltons ever made a wager, but his interests ran from authorship ('Vatheck') to collecting books, from works of art to architecture.

We are still in debt to Beckford the collector. At sixty-two he outran his resources temporarily, and put Fonthill and a great part of its contents up for sale. (The gross return was £330,000.) Still a wealthy man, he settled in Lansdowne Crescent in Bath and went on buying. At his death in 1844, the amazing collection was bequeathed to his daughter Susan Euphemia, Duchess of Hamilton.

Diminished by that first sale at Fonthill in 1822, the collection suffered further dismemberment by a sale at Hamilton Palace in 1862. Some remains with the family and has been cherished as it deserves.

To that part of it still at Brodick the sporting dukes made their own characteristic additions. They accumulated trophies and a sporting library; they commissioned and bought pictures which transport one back to a vanished world of coaching and hunting, horse racing and prize fighting.

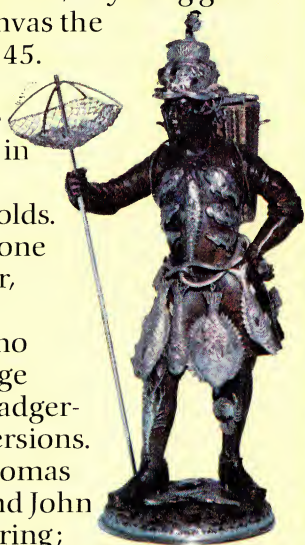
At one level, propriety is upheld by the presence of Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort at Ascot in 1845 to see the race for the Emperor of Russia's Plate (to which, Basil Skinner has reminded us in a scholarly monograph on Brodick's sporting pictures, the original title of the Gold Cup was restored in 1853). At another, anything goes.

John Frederick Herring recorded on canvas the action at Ascot on that day of strict decorum in 1845. It is Brodick's good fortune that in the previous year Herring was on hand at Epsom to 'freeze' by similar brushwork the start of the 'dirtiest Derby in history'.

Then as now it was a race for three-year-olds. The ultimate upshot was the death and burial of one four-year-old horse, the disappearance of another, and an action before the Exchequer Court.

Such skulduggery caused resentment, no doubt, but it can have upset few stomachs in an age when cockfighting, dog fighting, prize fighting, badger-baiting and rat-killing contests were popular diversions.

There are here works by the Alkens, Thomas Bardwell, Ben Marshall, Thomas Rowlandson and John Nott Sartorius and many more in addition to Herring; curiously there is none by Stubbs.



Bardwell painted William Henry Nassau, fourth Earl of Rochford, with horse and groom before his house—Easton Park, Suffolk—in 1741. The eighth Duke features in the crowd which watched the Jackson-Mendoza fight at Hornechurch in 1745, artist unknown.

The eighth and ninth Dukes set their sights on the St Leger, successfully too. Seven wins in twenty-eight years (1786-1814) is better than a pass mark.



Nevertheless, it was William Alexander, coming two generations later, who cut the greatest dash on the racecourses of Britain and France. Inheriting at the age of eighteen in 1863, just a year after the great sale at Hamilton Palace, he had already a formidable reputation as a gambler. It did not grow less when he acquired a string of horses. He took the Grand National with Cortolvin in 1867. Losses having exceeded winnings to a sensational degree, there was an interim of fourteen years in which race-going meant for the most part wagering on other people's horses.

There was, there had to be, a come-back. Fiddler won for him the Alexandra Plate at Ascot in 1881 and he took the Chesterfield Cup twice, in 1878 and 1882. The Cup remains at Brodick. Friday, the horse which won it in 1878, is memorialised in an oil painting by John Duval.

Through the Duke's lifetime the normal round within the castle followed the same pattern as in other great country houses—house parties, guests for the shooting and stalking in season. Few great houses had a first-rate deer forest so conveniently to hand, fewer still the benefit of first-rate communications provided by the railways and Clyde steamers.

This was not merely a convenience for the castle. It affected all aspects of life in the island, from the getting in of supplies and the export of livestock to the problem of how to cope with the 'visitors' whom the steamers put ashore in ever-increasing numbers. The laird's instruction was that they were to be free to enjoy the infinite variety of Arran.

Then chance and mischance, frequent in Hamilton affairs, intervened. At the death of the twelfth Duke in 1895, the direct line failed*. Happily for Arran, he bequeathed Brodick to his daughter Lady Mary Louise, then in her eleventh year. She lived to be seventy-two.

Her marriage to the sixth Duke of Montrose in 1906 brought additional domestic obligations and a greater range of public duty. She and her husband raised a family here. Lady Jean Fforde, their daughter, in her introduction to this guidebook has described the castle as 'the most homely home to be shown to the public'.

It was Mary Louise, Duchess of Montrose, who made it so. And in the making of the 'wild' garden, down the hill between the castle and the bay, she created beauty in abundance. Neither achievement came much short of genius.

*The kinsman who succeeded, Alfred Douglas, thirteenth Duke of Hamilton, tenth Duke of Brandon, was descended from the fourth Duke of Hamilton: he prefixed his patronymic Douglas to the Hamilton name. The Hamilton archive, an indispensable source and point of reference for students of Scottish history, is in the custody of the present Duke of Hamilton and is lodged at Lennoxlove, East Lothian.



3. The Castle Rooms

The front door, under the north-western tower, opens into the entrance hall, which gives a first glimpse of Brodick's riches.

One realises, on the staircase, how diverse these riches are. There is a series of racing scenes by Pollard. The 'Brodick' Hamiltons are commemorated by portrait busts—William, eleventh Duke and his bride, Princess Marie of Baden; William Alexander, twelfth Duke and his Duchess. Portraits, three-quarter length, of the tenth Duke and his wife Susan Euphemia Beckford, painted in 1852, were the work of Willes Maddox.

Ranged on the walls is an array of stags' heads, some ninety in number, all of the old Arran stock except one. Prince George Festetics' estate in Hungary yielded the alien.



The first three rooms off the landing at the head of the staircase were the personal apartments of Mary Louise, Duchess of Montrose: dressing room and bedroom on the west front, boudoir overlooking the garden.

Should you need to be reminded of the elegance and utility of 18th-century furniture, take note of the dressing room. The Sheraton folding-top dressing table, in banded mahogany, is companioned by a Chippendale tallboy and a George III corner washstand (the Spode four-piece earthenware toilet set decorated with musical motifs).

The bedroom is hung with family portraits and water-colours (some the work of the Duchess herself). The principal pieces of furniture are a Heppelwhite four-post bed and an important George II chest in padouk wood. The adjustable bed-table in rosewood is early Victorian.



The boudoir was the Duchess' sittingroom. Over the chimneypiece she put a portrait by David Scougal of Anne, Duchess of Hamilton in her own right—'the good Duchess Anne'—in a satin dress and a blue and grey wrap. A similar place of honour is given to a pair of George III silver-gilt sconces decorated with the Hamilton device. The marquetry bureau and the walnut corner cupboard are of 18th-century date, the first Dutch, the other English.

Of the other pictures in the boudoir five are landscape sketches by Thomas Gainsborough, and four came from the Beckford collection—a religious panel by Teniers, a slightly larger panel of the Magdalen reading by the 'Master of the Half-length', a sea scene by Copley Fielding, and a portrait by J H Fragonard.

The Duchess' suite is an intimate and private domain in contrast to the Boudoir Landing and to the gallery which gives access to the main reception rooms.



It is on the landing that the Beckford connection is first made explicit. There is a Turner watercolour of his home, Fonthill Abbey, and a study of the great collector himself, on his deathbed. (The original of the cabinet seen in the latter picture stands below.)

Here it begins to be seen that Brodick possesses the largest single portion of the Beckford collection under one roof anywhere in the world—and what a legacy it is.

Consider the contents of the mahogany cabinet: Chinese, Japanese and Flemish ivory figures, spoons, vessels of porcelain and agate, old English glass, a Louis XV snuffbox in gold. More exquisite even than these, the set of Sevres porcelain on the second shelf—tray, teapot, cream jug, sugar bowl and two coffee cups and saucers—is inset with jewels. And it was Beckford who acquired the set of six Venetian stools in the form of crouching Nubian boys, supporting upholstered cushion seats.



Three generations disposed their most treasured possessions in the drawing room under the heraldic splendours of the ceiling, mentioned earlier. The furnishings consist largely of Italian and French pieces. Among the Italian furniture are a pair of neo-classical marquetry commodes, probably Piedmontese, c 1780, which stand

between the windows. Above them hang Venetian looking glasses. There is, to the right of the fireplace, a Louis XVI commode, signed by Louis Boudin. The giltwood seat furniture is Louise-Philippe and dates from the 1830s.



To a comparable assemblage of pictures the Hamiltons added two small pastoral paintings by Watteau taken from the Beckford collection, and a portrait of the Duc d'Alencon by Clouet which was once in the Royal collection of Charles I and has his cypher branded on the reverse.

Largest and most spectacular of the ornaments are a pair of Chinese porcelain tureens with covers (Chien Lung, 1736-95) modelled as geese and mounted on silver bases made in Rotterdam and representing waves. No less evocative are a Paris dam porcelain bowl and cover, a present from Napoleon to Stephanie de Beauharnais.

The chandelier which hangs from the great plaster ceiling was brought from the Duke of Montrose's home, Buchanan Castle in Stirlingshire, before that castle was demolished. The full-length portrait over the piano is that of the lady who raised Brodick to her own pitch of excellence and order—



the Duchess, twenty-eight years old, in a black dress and seated by a table; painted in London in 1912, it was signed with a flourish by Philip de Laszlo.

The old library has, appropriately, a substantial number of the Brodick sporting pictures and a pair of walnut armchairs, 'Régence', from the early years of the 18th century. The French circular library table, its centre of satinwood, its border inlaid with marquetry, exhibits the cypher MD for Marie, Princess of Baden.

Other celebrated sporting pictures are hung in the dining room, pride of place being given to Herring's 'Dirtiest Derby'. The refectory table is of oak and dates from the early 17th century. The silver, of various periods, with which it is set is from the



Hamilton, Beckford and Rochford collections. The dining chairs are covered in Cordova leather.

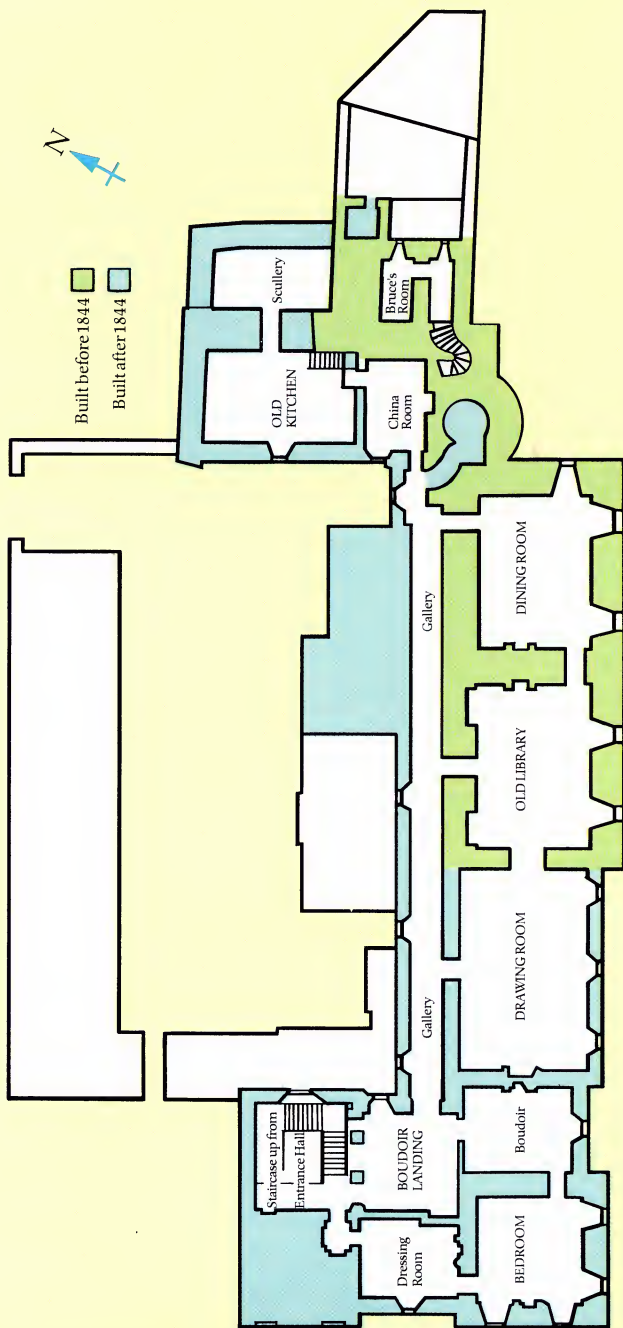
The portrait painters represented in the gallery include Van Dyck, Sir Godfrey Kneller, Bartholomew Dandridge and Thomas Bardwell, and the subjects Henry, Prince of Orange and the Earls of Rochford. Francis Xavier Winterhalter's portrait of the twelfth Duke is signed and dated Baden 1863.



In order that all of the castle's treasures may be given a showing, the displays of decorative items are subject to change from time to time. Look in the flower room for china and porcelain. There are many services on which to draw for examples of Chelsea, Meissen, Sevres and Copenhagen. A Worcester tea service in terracotta and gilt, one of William Beckford's wedding presents to his daughter and son-in-law, was made for the family. A harlequin set of French and Austrian coffee-cans collected by the late Duchess of Montrose is on permanent display.

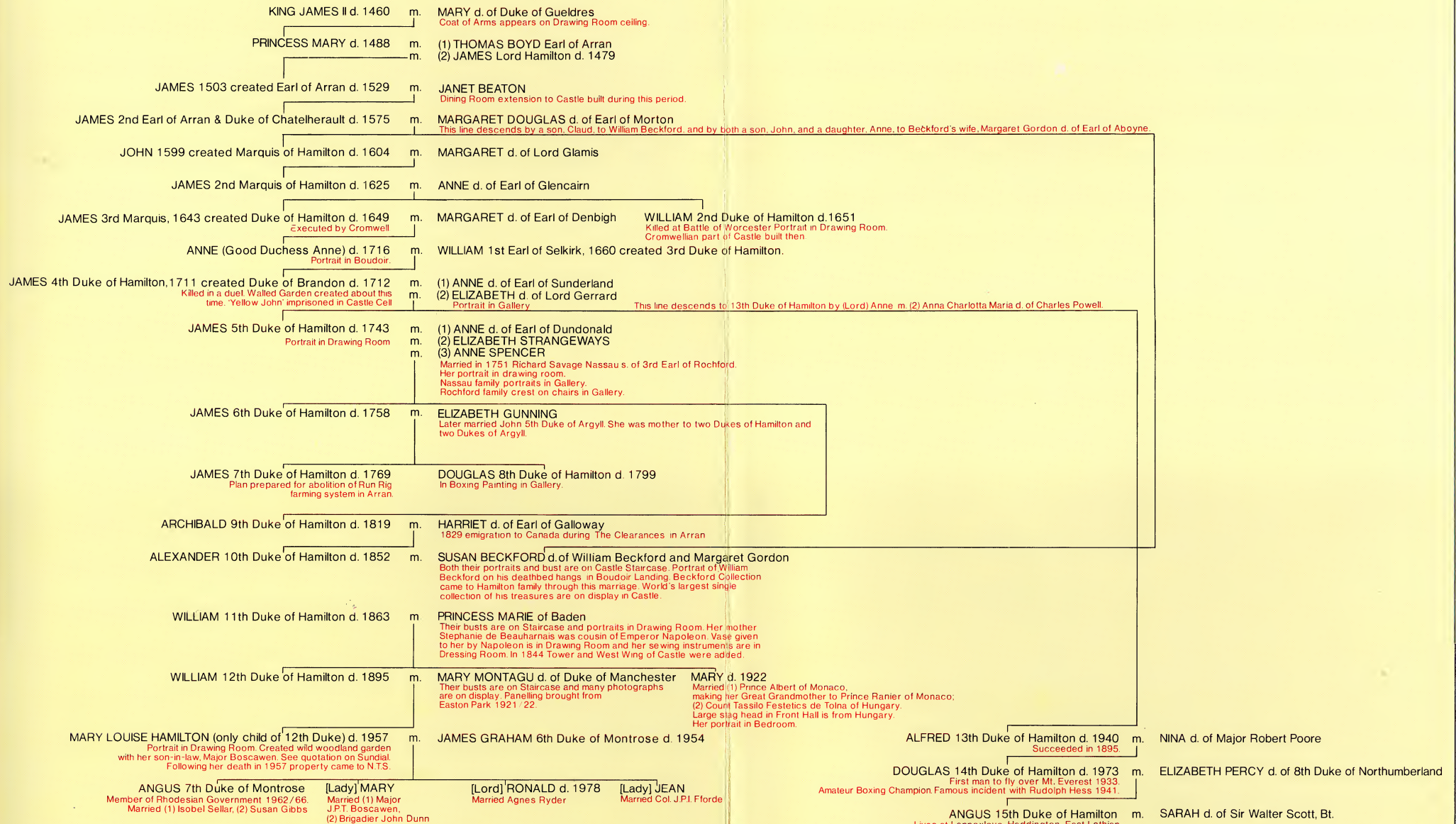


Plan of the First Floor of Brodick Castle.



Family Tree of the Hamilton owners of Brodick Castle.

Oldest mason work in Castle late thirteenth century.



THE NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND has been described as the country's strangest landlord.

It is not an individual but an organisation; not a Government department but a private charity. Collectively it is an association of over 85,000 people with one thing in common—a love of the Scottish scene in all its aspects.

The Trust was brought into being in 1931 by a few prominent Scots concerned at the destruction of much of the country's heritage of landscape and architecture. Its task, set forth in various private Acts of Parliament, is to promote the care of fine buildings, historic places and beautiful countryside. Now, nearly fifty years later, it is an influential national body whose view is sought by government bodies and other organisations concerned with the preservation of Scotland.

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Members' subscriptions, along with donations and legacies, provide a major source of income vital to the continuation of the Trust's work.

For further information on the Trust and details of membership, please inquire at the castle or write to:
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5 Charlotte Square
Edinburgh EH2 4DU.



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